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Chief, Contact Division Attn: Support Branch

30 January 1961

Chief, Washington Office

MRP Concern Over Holding of Menoyo Befugee Group

1. Lack Exelly, a sporadic source who is close to M. R. P. leadership, notified this office on 23 January 1961 that eighteen ranking Cuban defectors were being held by U. S. Immigration suthorities. They had escaped by boat after having remained in the Castro Government for many months as part of the underground.

- 2. Their leader is Gutierres Menoyo, a fighter in the Spanish Civil War and well known Leftist. For this reason, he and his colleagues are probably suspect. Menolo Rey negotiated with Menoyo three times in Havana in October and Bovember 1960, while he was setting up the M. R. P. underground, and was never betrayed. The M. R. P. believes that Gutierres and his group are sincerely sati-Castro and assisted in its escape from Cuba.
- 3. Skelly stated that the defection of these important people is a blow to Castro because they can become important leaders in the Escambray. They intend to go back to Cuba to fight actively.
- this can be discovered in time, but it fears that their being held by U. S. suthorities may well discourage other similar defections and, more seriously, could play into Castro's hands as a propaganda device to point out what happens to people who escape to the U. S. The M. R. P. told Kelly that the U. S. should handle the matter discreetly to make some announcement that the eighteen are being held "for their own safety" or some such, which would prevent Castro from obtaining a psychological advantage.
- 5. The above information was passed to Mr. Reems, the 00/C Duty Officer, on 28 January 1961.

F. J. Sheridan

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